In the Claims

1. (Currently amended)   A method in a data processing system for automatically

modifying rules to process electronic messages:

detecting user input moving an electronic message into a folder, wherein a rule is

associated with the folder;

determining whether the electronic message matches the rule;

identifying characteristics of the electronic message if a match between the rule and the

electronic message is absent; and

automatically modifying the rule using the characteristics to form a modified rule.

2. (Original)   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

processing received messages using the modified rule.

3. (Original)   The method of claim 2, wherein the processing step is initiated in

response to another user input approving use of the modified rule.

4. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the criteria includes priority-based

common fields and common content.

5. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the folder is a trash folder.

6. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the characteristics includes at least one

of a sender address, a selected word in a subject line body of the electronic message, a select

word in a body of the electronic message, and an attribute of the time/date field of the electronic message.

7. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying step includes:

identifying the characteristics of the electronic message absent from the rule.

8. (Currently amended)   A method in a data processing system for <u>automatically</u> modifying rules for processing messages, the method comprising the data processing system implemented steps of:

detecting a manipulation of an electronic message, wherein a rule is associated with the manipulation;

determining whether the electronic message matches the rule;

identifying characteristics of the electronic message if a match between the rule and the electronic message is absent; and

<u>automatically</u> modifying the rule using the characteristics.

9. (Original)   The method of claim 8, wherein the manipulation is a deletion of the message.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the manipulation is a movement of the electronic message from a first folder to a second folder.

11. (Currently amended) A data processing system comprising:

a bus system;

a communications unit connected to the bus system;

a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory includes as set of instructions; and

a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to detect a manipulation of an electronic message in which a rule is associated with the manipulation, determine whether the electronic message matches the rule, identify characteristics of the electronic message if a match between the rule and the electronic message is absent, and <u>automatically</u> modify the rule using the characteristics.

12. (Original) The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the bus system is a single bus.

13. (Previously amended)   The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the bus system includes a primary bus and a secondary bus.

14. (Original) The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the processing unit includes a plurality of processors.

15. (Original) The data processing system of claim 11, wherein the communications unit is one of a modem and Ethernet adapter.

16. (Currently amended) A data processing system for <u>automatically</u> modifying rules to process electronic messages, the data processing system comprising:

detecting means for detecting user input moving an electronic message into a folder, wherein a rule is associated with the folder;

determining means for determining whether the electronic message matches the rule;

identifying means for identifying characteristics of the electronic message if a match between the rule and the electronic message is absent; and

modifying means for <u>automatically</u> modifying the rule using the characteristics to form a modified rule.

17. (Original) The data processing system of claim 16 further comprising:

processing means for processing received messages using the modified rule.

18. (Original) The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the processing means is initiated in response to another user input approving use of the modified rule.

19. (Original) The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the criteria includes priority-based common fields and common content.

20. (Original) The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the folder is a trash folder.

21. (Original) The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the characteristics includes at least one of a sender address, a selected word in a subject line body of the electronic message, a select word in a body of the electronic message, and an attribute of the time/date field of the electronic message.

22. (Original) The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the identifying means includes:

identifying means for identifying the characteristics of the electronic message absent from the rule.

23. (Currently amended) A data processing system for <u>automatically</u> modifying rules for processing messages, the data processing system comprising:

detecting means for detecting a manipulation of an electronic message, wherein a rule is associated with the manipulation;

determining means for determining whether the electronic message matches the rule;

identifying means for identifying characteristics of the electronic message if a match between the rule and the electronic message is absent; and

modifying means for <u>automatically</u> modifying the rule using the characteristics.

24. (Original) The data processing system of claim 23, wherein the manipulation is a deletion of the message.

25. (Original) The data processing system of claim 23, wherein the manipulation is a movement of the electronic message from a first folder to a second folder.

26. (Currently amended) A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a data processing system for <u>automatically</u> modifying rules to process electronic messages:

first instructions for detecting user input moving an electronic message into a folder,

wherein a rule is associated with the folder;

second instructions for determining whether the electronic message matches the rule;

third instructions for identifying characteristics of the electronic message if a match

between the rule and the electronic message is absent; and

fourth instructions for <u>automatically</u> modifying the rule using the characteristics to form

a modified rule.

27. (Currently amended) A computer program product in a computer readable medium

for use in a data processing system for <u>automatically</u> modifying rules for processing messages,

the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for detecting a manipulation of an electronic message, wherein a rule

is associated with the manipulation;

second instructions for determining whether the electronic message matches the rule;

third instructions for identifying characteristics of the electronic message if a match

between the rule and the electronic message is absent; and

fourth instructions for <u>automatically</u> modifying the rule using the characteristics.